

## State Commission

Volunteer Florida was created by Executive Order of the Governor in 1993 and established in Florida Statute by the Florida Legislature in 1994 to administer AmeriCorps funding in Florida. Volunteer Florida (VF) administers \$31.7 million in funding for 45 grantees across Florida, including \$10,644,214 in federal grants from CNCS and \$9,352,803 in local match. VF leverages \$32 in non-state funding for every dollar of state funding received. In 2014-2015, 1,289 Florida AmeriCorps members provided 1.69 million hours of service to Florida, a value of \$35.6 million. They served 49,703 students in 268 Florida schools in 2014-2015. Volunteer Florida welcomed five new AmeriCorps programs in 2015, representing \$2.1 million in new funding. The Volunteer Florida Emergency Management Department continues to provide training to AmeriCorps programs and members in Florida. In 2015, VF coordinated 40 partners' activities in preparation for Hurricane Erika, managed a \$900,000 FEMA grant, and deployed to Pasco County following severe flooding. The VF Foundation continues to work closely with Governor Rick Scott, the Florida Cabinet, and the Legislature to recognize more Florida volunteers, educators, veterans, and entrepreneurs.

## AmeriCorps State

Across Florida, 1,289 AmeriCorps members gave 1,690,773 hours of service valued at \$36 million last year. Nearly 85 percent of these AmeriCorps members served in an education-focused program. In 2014-2015, the AmeriCorps members who served through Volunteer Florida's grantees tutored, mentored, and provided other educational services to 49,703 students in 268 schools. Of these students, 78 percent improved their academic skills. Florida's AmeriCorps programs brought in an additional 8,183 volunteers who contributed 80,158 hours of service valued at \$1.7 million. For their service, Volunteer Florida's AmeriCorps members earned \$6.5 million in education awards.

The AmeriCorps Northwest Florida Environmental Stewards, in partnership with the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, is an environmental stewardship program of Northwest Florida State College and has 13 AmeriCorps members in service. These members are helping to restore precious habitat in coastal communities through a year-long environmental STEM curriculum called Grasses in Classes. Students gain STEM skills as they restore the Choctawhatchee watershed. Members and community volunteers work on restoration projects designed to restore, beautify, and maintain the parks and public lands in the watershed district. Each month, members teach hands-on lessons to support classroom science education. The program culminates with students planting shoreline grasses at salt marsh restoration sites. In 2014, AmeriCorps members served 1,863 third through fifth graders at 20 schools; 1,557 of these students increased their knowledge of STEM concepts. More than 400 volunteers served 1,015 hours to support environmental education and restoration. The program instills a love of the local habitat, restores shoreline, and inspires the next generation of watershed stewards.

## AmeriCorps National

Jacksonville, Miami, and Orlando have 355 City Year AmeriCorps members who serve full-time at 34 schools, helping more than 37,920 students at greatest risk of dropping out. City Year AmeriCorps members work alongside teachers, using research-based tools to improve students' attendance, behavior, and performance in math and English. The members also lead afterschool programs and school-wide initiatives to improve school culture. In Jacksonville, at Matthew Gilbert Middle School, every student with an F or D in math who had individual support improved to a C or higher. At Jacksonville's Raines High School, 97 percent of students moved from below 90 percent average daily attendance to at or above 90 percent by the end of the year. In Orlando, 90 percent of students who had individual support from City Year AmeriCorps members maintained or improved by at least one letter grade in English Language Arts. At Miami's Booker T. Washington High School, every student who had individual attention for behavior either had fewer suspensions or maintained zero suspensions.

The Urban League of Broward County has four AmeriCorps members who serve through its Healthy Living Peer Educators Program. The AmeriCorps members reach out to participants, help them enroll in health insurance, and teach preventive health education workshops. Recently, the members have conducted workshops at local health fairs in the Fort Lauderdale area, focusing specifically on the importance of health insurance, HIV prevention, nutrition, and fitness. Thanks to these workshops, Broward County residents have learned how eating habits affect bodily functions, weight, blood pressure, and sugar levels. The members led discussions on food deserts and gave participants information about local community gardens where they can buy fresh, organic fruits and vegetables at a discounted rate.

One Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Corps AmeriCorps member served this past year at University of West Florida in Pensacola. YMHFA is a certification course that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of adolescent mental health problems, focuses on the importance of early intervention, and teaches how to help adolescents who are in crisis or having a mental health or substance use challenge. The AmeriCorps member, who is a trained YMHFA instructor, certified 167 community members in the program. A three month follow-up survey revealed that YMHFA strategies helped 143 adolescents who struggle with a mental health challenge or illness.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

The Education Foundation of Alachua County works with an AmeriCorps VISTA member to improve access to primary and preventive health care for low-income K-12 students in Gainesville. There are an estimated 4,758 uninsured children in Alachua County, approximately 10.2 percent of the total population. The VISTA member recruits and trains volunteers to perform outreach, engagement and support to increase enrollment of uninsured and economically disadvantaged students eligible for health insurance and health benefit programs offered by the state. From 2014 - 2015, through the VISTA's capacity-building activities, more than 75 community volunteers were recruited and trained, and 120 new clients from the targeted population were enrolled and utilizing primary and preventative health care. In 2014 alone, members in Florida mobilized more than 34,000 community volunteers and raised over \$25 million in support of organizations like El Sol that are fighting poverty.

With support from AmeriCorps VISTA members El Sol, Jupiter's Neighborhood Resource Center, has become a model for communities seeking to serve day laborers and promote positive immigrant integration. Members help organize and connect Jupiter's day-labor hiring of Guatemalan and Mexican immigrants in a structured & safe atmosphere. Members also recruit community volunteers to enhance El Sol's services to day-laborers in language and literacy instruction, counseling, health education, civic, education, legal, occupational and financial workshops. Members have helped build family stability to create a more sustainable, resilient community.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

The Tallahassee Food Network (TFN) requested an AmeriCorps NCCC team to provide maintenance on community gardens, aquaponics systems, and support the local food bank and farmers market. The program's mission is to grow community-based good food systems that are environmentally sustainable and maximize community self-reliance and social justice. AmeriCorps members assisted in the maintenance of four different gardens around Tallahassee and two iGrow locations on Dunn St. and South City. These projects focused on garden maintenance, with members composting, spreading mulch, transplanting vegetation and harvesting produce. The team also worked with Tallahassee Aquaponics, assisting with the maintenance of eight aquaponics systems, the construction of two additional systems and the upkeep of aquaponics pools. Additionally, members assisted with the setup and break down of the Frenchtown Heritage Farmer's Market. Members also supported the Second Harvest of the Big Bend Food Bank by inventorying all items at the food bank and assisted with a seasonal clean-up of the garden at Bond Elementary School.

In its service with BRACE, an AmeriCorps NCCC team helped hang insulation, install drywall, flooring, doors, baseboards, and paint homes damaged by floods in Pensacola. The program's mission is to reduce the loss of life, injury, property damage, environmental impact and economic loss due to disaster, through fostering communication, cooperation, collaboration and coordination among community, faith-based, non-profit, private and public organizations active in one or more phases of emergency management. In the first few weeks, AmeriCorps members did a full rehab of a home affected by flooding. Afterwards, members were split into different work areas, with one group traveling to various disaster victims' homes to relocate family possessions into a storage pod so the program could begin the home-restoration process. Another group worked at the program office to assist with disaster preparedness research, event planning and data entry. Lastly, the team helped remove mold from the exterior of trailer homes due to the recent flooding. The team provided a sense of hope to the Pensacola community by proving there are individuals that care enough to offer their time to people in need.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

During the 2014-2015 school year, 51 children in Putnam and St. Johns counties were matched with a caring, dedicated Foster Grandparent volunteer mentor through Communities In Schools of Northeast Florida. A total of 43 Foster Grandparents, ages 55 through 86, served a minimum of 20 hours per week at ten different school sites. Among the special needs students mentored, 100 percent graduated on time, 100 percent improved their attendance, 100 percent met their high-risk behavior reduction goals, 100 percent improved their attitude and commitment to school, and 99 percent were promoted to the next grade level. This national service partnership further surrounds students with a community of supportive interventions, empowering them to stay in school and expand individual opportunity.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

Everyday Impact Broward's 133 Senior Companion Program volunteers positively impact the lives of frail elderly, disabled adults and veterans by providing peer support to the most vulnerable citizens in Broward County. Over the year, SCP volunteers served 225 Independent Living clients an average of 7.4 hours per week. In addition, 98.67 percent of clients served reported an increase in social ties and perceived social support. SCP volunteers served 61 caregivers 7.92 hours per week and 98.3 percent of caregivers similarly reported an increase in social ties and perceived social ties. The friendship and interdependence between the client and the Senior Companion is the bridge that keeps both client and Senior Companion connected to the community, making that community stronger. As CNCS's research supports, the service that SCP volunteers provide has brought peace of mind to caregivers and an improved quality of life for the companions themselves.

## Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) transforms lives by using evidence to find what works and make it work for more people. The SIF Classic and SIF Pay for Success programs harness the expertise of grant-making intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits serving low-income communities across America. The SIF programs in Florida are focused on employment attainment, affordable housing, food security, and justice system avoidance. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$411,401 to expand the impact of five nonprofits in Florida.

## Volunteer Generation Fund

Volunteer Florida uses its Volunteer Generation Fund grant to support a skills-based volunteer program using evidence-based principles of service and the concept of volunteering as a pathway to work. The funding helped to increase the capacity of organization to recruit, manage, support and retain skills-based volunteers to serve in high value volunteer assignments. Subgrantees receive comprehensive training, funding for program enhancements and ongoing technical assistance, and coaching to establish or strengthen their skills-based volunteer program. Volunteer Florida invested \$150,000 in grants for 15 Florida nonprofits. The 15 Volunteer Generation Fund subgrantees recruited 6,476 skills based volunteers who served 90,443 hours valued at more than \$1.9 million. A total of 743 skills based volunteers were engaged to support STEM and an additional 519 skills-based volunteers were recruited for My Brother's Keeper initiatives. Volunteer Florida in partnership with the Florida Association of Volunteer Resource Managers provided Excellence in Volunteer Management Training to 74 individuals representing 55 organizations resulting in increased capacity of volunteer managers.